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**Review article**

## **FUNCTION OF TRANSLATORS AND CULTURE INSTITUTIONS IN TRANSLATING ENGLISH NOVEL FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE INTO SERBIAN LANGUAGE**

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**Abstract.** *English is usually been selected as a target language in translating due to its global position as a mediating language for the promotion of international literature but in this paper we are considering the importance of translations of the English children's literature into the Serbian language transmitting its contents, cultural heritage, values, (hidden) ideologies and stereotypes. Until the First World War English literature was popularized in Serbia in magazines Srpski književni glasnik, Delo, Letopis Matice Srpske, Brankovo kolo, comprising translations, reviews, comments, and the opinions on the translation methods. Translations embodied universal values such as cooperation between cultures, similar and different mentality of people incarnated in heroes' actions, religion, accepting differences in all forms. While translating English novel for children and young people time and cultural spaces and stimulation of the development of spiritual wealth of readers were constantly in focus. The goal of this paper is also to indicate the specificities of this cultural and literary work in a more detailed way.*

**Key words:** *culture, translator, English novel, children's literature, spiritual wealth*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Literary work represents miscellaneous world of man and nature. Many universal values are contained in it, which is why translation from one language into another requires a more complex form or higher level of approaching textual art works. Interest in the European, primarily English literature both for children and adults, has occupied attention of translators, authors, poets, linguists and theoreticians of literature. Its role is very important because it represents the initiation of intercultural relations expressed by a language of various (different) symbols.

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Recipients' needs entailed new translations, considering the fact that social-historical changes implied different attitudes towards expressed and written topics. Thus translations had their line of development just as newly written works of English literature had their own developmental course.

In translation, which in many cases has subjective nature, one reveals the values of the work being translated and of the translator himself: phonetic, lexical and grammatical characteristics of the two languages involved in the process of translation. It is logical that the translator while translating the original work uses his own idioms which are the base of his lexical fund. This manifests in translations of the same literary work by various translators. In general, translators try to form well-known educational and cultural triangle with their translations: literary work - translator - reader.

## 2. TRANSLATION - NEW CREATION

Translating for children establishes a unique relationship between the adult writer or translator and the child audience. Children's literature is often treated "in a cavalier fashion" (Lathey<sup>1</sup>, 2006, 8), as a subcategory or a subclass of literature. The "peripheral position" of literature for children can even be seen as providing the right conditions to allow manipulations in the texts by deleting, abridgement or adaptation (Shavit<sup>2</sup>, 2006: 26-39). The discussion on possible ideology and "cultural transfer" includes another important figure, the publisher: "publishers are generally credited with having the key role; for it is they who identify the market and often commission, modify or, more rarely, select texts to satisfy this market" (Hunt<sup>3</sup>, 1995, 155/6). The translator's role in children's literature is usually seen as twofold: first maintaining translation must remain as close as possible to the source text, and provide approximations and equivalences in the source text, or "produce sameness" (Oittinen<sup>4</sup>, 2000, 84-97). The second view claims a translator must consider the target audience first and "gauge the precise degree of foreignness" (Bell<sup>5</sup>, 2006, 232-240). It is important to note that strategies chosen by translators for children are primarily dictated by their image of the child (Oittinen<sup>6</sup>, 2000).

A linguist Cvetan Todorov greatly confirms translator's role. He says that in the process of translation, it is necessary to pay attention and to carefully observe the function of one element in literary creation which represents its opportunity to enter the interrelation with other elements of the same creation and with the creation as a whole (Todorov<sup>7</sup>, 1975). He also points out that the meaning of a metaphor consists in contrasting it to another image, or in being more intense by one or more degrees. That complexity of cultural relations and linguistic diversity between close and far cultural spaces draws attention of translators and encourages them to get to know each other better through literary works and other contents.

<sup>1</sup> Gillian, L. 2006. *The Translation of Children's Literature: A Reader*. Toronto: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

<sup>2</sup> Zohar, S. 2006. "Translation of Children's Literature." In *The Translation of Children's Literature: A Reader*, ed. Lathey, G. pp. 25-40. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

<sup>3</sup> Hunt, P. 1995. *Criticism, Theory and Children's Literature*. Cambridge: Blackwell.

<sup>4</sup> Oittinen, R. 1993. *I Am Me-I Am Other: On the Dialogics of Translating for Children*. Tampere: University of Tampere.

<sup>5</sup> Bell, A. 2006. "Translator's Notebook: Delicate Matters." In *The Translation of Children's Literature: A Reader*, ed. Gillian L, pp. 232-240. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

<sup>6</sup> Oittinen, R. 2000. *Translating for Children*. New York: Garland Publishing.

<sup>7</sup> Todorov, C. (1987). *Uvod u fantastičnu književnost*. Beograd: Rad.

Otherwise, without translators, every literary work would be left buried among the four walls of a single language.

The art of writing is a great puzzle for the writer himself, as well as for readers and translators. Writer's thought, expressed in a word play, with style adequate to children's psychology, develops, as many linguists and theoreticians claim, according to the principles of not only external, but internal linguistic logic, which should be familiar and sensed by the translator. Finding stylistic equivalents in the target language contributes to a richer translation.

Many famous writers, linguists and theoreticians observe aesthetic values of literary works for children originating from the English speaking and writing areas. In this part of the paper we focus our attention to two modern authors commenting on translation and enabling new interpretation of, for example, fairy tale personality. In magazine *Politika*, on July 7, 2018 in Belgrade, the following text by Milena Đordijević was published on page 5: "Alice's play is full of freedom. Carroll in his narrative procedure uses so-called shifted perspective which is the result of Alice's attitude and her worldview, her vision of the future world which she wants to shape differently so that it fits her and that she can live in it. This can be best seen in her dialogue with the Caterpillar. When the Caterpillar asked her a question, she replied: "I...I don't know how to say it to you madam, just now I don't know... Of course, I know who I was when I woke up this morning, but I would say that I have changed many times since then" (Đordijević<sup>8</sup>, 2018, 5). Related to her word play, which is not only a play, we shall state the following thoughts about her metaphorical character: "Alice's identity is not lost, it is temporarily shaken and disturbed in constant change and development, but still it is constant in its change, able for a turn over" (Ibid).

To literary artist Vladislava Gordić Petković who wrote about Alice, the main character of Carroll's novel, this fairy-tale structure offers the possibility to interpret this character in different ways time and again: "From the expected and conventional, in stories and fairy-tales, characters have functional role in the structure of action" (Gordić Petković<sup>9</sup>, 2012, 7). Another example of the same author relates to the up-to-date science fiction prose about Harry Potter. She points out that fantastic discourse functions in the novel and enables the writer and translator later to swimmingly intertwine didactic and meaningful messages to the recipients, depending on the way of reading. Contemporary critics recognize traces of Greek myths in the novel about Harry Potter. Thus, for Gordić Petković: "Potter is the hero, the character who within himself synthesizes injustice which follows him and other characters. Potter experienced social and cultural conflicts, existential threat and deathly danger, followed the creation of global conspiracy of evil against good. In seven books of Hogwarts epopee, we witness his growing up, puberty rebellion, conflicts with authorities because of breaking the rules and exceeding authority, he experienced injustice, humiliation... was a victim of media war" (Gordić Petković, 2012, 7).

A great role in the popularization of the English novel for children and young people belongs to translators and culture institutions in Serbia. Relationship between Serbian and English culture institutions is inevitable because this is the way to enter overall linguistic and cultural context of a literary work, translated from the original to target language – Serbian language, and of the nation whose origins it celebrates. By virtue of dedicated work and engagement of translators on behalf of culture and educational institutions in

<sup>8</sup> Đordijević, M. (2018). *Politika*. p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Gordić Petković, V. (2012). *Detinjstvo*, vol. 2, 7.

the past, and especially in front of the forthcoming technical civilization, Serbian readers were introduced into the art of novel which celebrates life, changes way of thinking and reveals the beauty of the world (Eko<sup>10</sup>, 1973). The compliance of text with cultural issues is a major problem for the translator. Thus whether they produce sameness, or observe the target audience first and then gauge the precise degree of foreignness, translators for children primarily use strategies dictated by their image of the child. Translation not only safeguards the integrity of a language, but is also responsible for transmitting cultural values across different regions<sup>11</sup>, thus Alice and Harry Potter and many other children's characters might assume new shades of reading and interpreting in the target language.

### 2.1. Role of Serbian literary magazines

A popularity of translated works from many foreign languages was contributed to by literary magazines in Serbia, and multiple translations point to the artistic values making these works for children and young people literature evergreen. To support this statement, we mention works by D. Defoe, J. Swift, C. Dickens, O. Wilde, R. Kipling and many other authors whose works are very popular and equally draw attention nowadays. In the latest translations of the old literature for children, we recognize current topics, motives, actions and events. With the analysis of the selected digitalized bibliographic material, we can notice that beside the completely translated works, magazines published inserts popularizing the English novel for children and young people of a certain period according to the requests and needs of the Serbian readers. Children's spiritual and playful worlds require novels of adventure with many descriptions of places and time of the action, humor, interweaving of dreams and reality, an extraordinary realistic picture of times in the period of social-historical and cultural-education diffraction. It should be emphasized that in the translated novels special attention was drawn to fairy-tales and fantastic structures that overlay many scenes and integral textual structures. Literary translations were followed up by the literary critic that pointed to the fact that the analyses of translated works create channels for exchanging knowledge and views, not only of the condition of language in translation, but of the interests of the important critics for the young recipients' readings and inevitable effects.

Serbian literary magazines and their editors showed great interest in the English-Serbian literary and cultural relations. We cite important magazines that were publishing inserts and complete works for a long period of time such as the magazine *Srpski književni glasnik*. Its founder and the first editor was Bogdan Popović. Pages of this literary magazine contained translated works of Daniel Defoe, Charles Dickens and other important English writers for children and young people. Literary magazines represented foreign culture and language and mediators between writers and readers, promoting the universal values such as: cooperation and connection among cultures, religions, ethnic communities, differences, ways of life, etc.

Researchers, scientists and translators of the English novels for children and young people point to the important artistic values that make these works everlasting. By virtue of the published translations in magazines and other forms of publishing, modern readers can enter an imaginary dialogue with D. Defoe, J. Swift, C. Dickens, G. Elliot and others. We quote the following thought in order to support the stated attitudes: "Our interest in

<sup>10</sup> Umberto, E. (1973). *Kultura, informacija, komunikacija*. Beograd: Nolit.

<sup>11</sup> Syed, S. (2017). Translating a Literary Text: Enigma or Enterprise. *International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies*. 5(2), 75-80.

the English people and England has always been greater than their interest in us. In the English literature and culture in general, as older, there have been more paragons and models for our younger literature and culture. This is what our people educated in the West were striving for at the end of the traditional and patriarchal 19th, and at the beginning of the 20th century which meant even bigger interest in the West. That is the moment when new intellectual forces enter our cultural space and enthusiasm which was reflected in starting new literary magazines" (Matarić<sup>12</sup>, 2010, 15). Great attention is paid to the idea of Bogdan Popović about the importance of translation and the publishing of translated works in magazines: "Translations are real bliss of God... They enrich our literature with every valuable literary work". In our country not enough attention is paid to translated works, while German, English and French literature borrow from each other. Popović concludes that the most urgent need, borrowing from the foreign literature is something that our literature really needs. Of course, he is aware of the need to cherish native models, except foreign ones, even though they are the weakest ones" (Matarić, 2010, 17). Efforts made in translating literary works that contain centuries' wisdom of nations and civilizations and their popularization in literary magazines are of vital importance because text as a medium encourages struggle for life and the survival of heroes as the metaphor of the writer's attitude.

Let us mention translators and critics of translations whose reviews deserve special attention in modern times. A translator Elodija Mijatović, English by her origin, translated many works by Charles Dickens from English into Serbian language, while the researcher and scientist Nićifor Naumov wrote a monograph about his work. The critic and historian of literature, Jovan Skerlić, wrote about translated novel by George Elliot *The Mill on the Floss* in the magazine *Delo* in 1989 in the text entitled *One realistic novel*. Many translations of the English novels were published in magazine *Delo* before the First World War. At the same time the novel *Gulliver's travels* by Jonathan Swift was also published.

A magazine *Književna nedelja* redacted by the poet Sima Pandurović published a translated novel about jungle written by Rudyard Kipling. *Letopis Matice Srpske* was established in Pest in 1825 and it published famous Shakespeare's works translated by the poet Laza Kostić. Many years later a magazine *Brankovo kolo* (1895-1914) published several translations: works by Tomas Mann, Kipling and Oscar Wild.

Unlike mentioned novels and their authors, some English novels were translated indirectly. A translator Savatije Grbić translated the novel *Gulliver's travels* by Jonathan Swift from Russian language into Serbian in the magazine *Beleške* in 1903. A literary historian D. Puhalo says: "*Gulliver's travels* is one of the great works of the world's literature, it is the work which has been read with great pleasure for two centuries – although with not much understanding - by the young and adults all over the world. *Gulliver* has a great characteristic which is common to Shakespeare's plays: it is accessible to everyone and offers something for everyone's taste. Of course, the greatest impression is made on those who are able to see all its values and to find in it not only a comic-fantastic fairy-tale and an interesting adventurous travelogue, but a general human satire directed towards evil permanently present in the society" (Puhalo<sup>13</sup>, 1965, 37). All these emphasized values are visible due to translation in which the connection between

<sup>12</sup> Matarić, M. N. (2010). *Engleska književnost kod Srba (1900-1945)*. Beograd: Mali Nemo.

<sup>13</sup> Puhalo, D. (1965). *Istorija engleske književnosti*, I izdanje. Beograd: Naučna knjiga.

words, images, rhythm, and heroes' needs through adventurous actions was established. All these enable readers to reach the meaning just as a Japanese wise thought says that 'the experience of love is as important for our existence as rational conclusion'.

Magazines *Delo* and *Srpski književni glasnik*, beside other translations, published translations of Slobodan Jovanović and Vićentije Rakić in 1903. That was the year, according to some data, in which Jonathan Swift was mostly written about. Slobodan Jovanović, except translated inserts from *Gulliver's travels*, wrote the review of translation and specially pointed out the noticed values of Swift's writing. Magazine *Delo* brings out the following idea that was started in his own translation: "Its sharp social-political satire required mind related and trenchant enough to essentially understand it and interpret it in our environment and circumstances, and thus relate it to their creators with similar ideas or methods... Swift's power lies in knowing human nature, passion and vanity because of which his work is applicable in all times and all parties" (Jovanović, 1903, 226).

Analyses and critical reviews of translated works of the English literature for children and young people published in literary magazines and other forms of publication open ways to exchanging knowledge and views of not only the condition of language in translation, but of the important critics' interest in books for young people and inevitable effects on works of the Serbian writers of novels for children and young people. Old and new critic resources on the basis of many translations, point to a positive influence which in our novelists initiated creative sense of approaching problems of the world of childhood and youth. Criticism and ideas about translated novels for children had their contribution in a comparative perception of the deeper meaning of works that influenced creation in other linguistic environments.

## **2.2. Importance of translation agencies**

Translation agencies as institutions engaged in translating texts used by the recipients of various branches of science and art contribute to overcoming the geographical and cultural boundaries. For scientific and teaching research literary works for children and youth are very important in the original and the language of translation. Knowing the principles of translation theory, history of literature and aesthetics, translated works from the original English language into the target Serbian language should be evaluated with special caution. Considering the fact that literary works possess their own specific values, a member of translation agency without any special affinities, without understanding symbolism of language, its multiple meanings and metaphors, cannot transmit the main idea or the aesthetic message of the work being translated. Special attention is paid to methods, ways of translating literary text with applications from the works that occupy readers' attention. Except translation agencies, an important role in the popularization of translation or its reviews belong to publishing houses, cultural-educational institutions, or private publishing houses which are more and more popular in Serbia.

## **2.3. American corner and its role in presenting English literature to children and youth**

Departments known as the American corner function within national libraries of Serbia and they are equipped with diverse literary documentary material from the English and American territory, as well as with translated literary works with the purpose of closer and more authentic approaching genres for children and youth. Approaching

literary works through workshops, by the personal engagement of readers guided by librarians, readers enrich their lexical knowledge in English language; they read magazines and notice the conception and structure of texts. Comics, being very popular contents of the modern culture, enable communication between readers and characters with the help of the minus procedure (Lotmann<sup>14</sup>, 1976). The anthologies of selected children's creations are very valuable, as well as the selection of science fiction literature and works of contemporary literature written in English language. Except direct enclosure of children and available literature in the original language, by reading translated works, recipients can have their personal experience which will in certain circumstances stimulate readers and interested researchers to a creative act.

### 3. CONCLUSION

Language has its inner form or structure according to the important linguists of the world, and expresses in this way complete spiritual and intellectual unity of the nation to which it belongs. This is why the need for translating literary works has been pointed out which in the symbolism of language function as art, and thus translation, as new achievement, takes important place in the culture of a certain nation. Adequate understanding of words and syntagms is very important in order to know the culture contained in history, philosophy, folklore or mythology. Since a word gives voice to thoughts, feelings, and inner transformations of mind expressed in poetical context, it is important both in translating and reading to interpret its symbolism in the right way. Different beliefs of translators and critics have led to both positive and contradictory opinions. To conclude, we shall point out evaluations of the two authorities in reviewing translation: Isidora Sekulić and Stanislav Vinaver.

Isidora Sekulić points out: "Dickens not only had enormous imagination, he had something even better, the gift of premonition. Imagination creates fiction, probable fiction; premonition sets reality. Which reality? The one that cannot be found in the street, nor in ordinary life, but only in an ingenious person who can do everything that was suggested to him with great power or great excitement" (Sekulić<sup>15</sup>, 1962, 306).

Stanislav Vinaver made the first Serbian translation of *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll and according to contemporary literary critics, this and his other translations possess high artistic value and those aesthetic categories without which literature for children cannot function: play, humor, imagination, creative language and its free use, poeticism, nonsense, minimal presence of didactic elements. Stanislav Vinaver expresses his opinion about translations of other works. He says that literary work in translation expresses Kipling's mysterious and wise music of words which flows not only by and over words, it bypasses them, it goes forward, breaks through, comes from their very essence and bursts out from their stone with the bright miracle of secret and unexpected source (Vinaver<sup>16</sup>, 2012).

The translator of children's literary texts has to deal with culture-bound terms. Dynamic status of children's literature requires a continuous adjustment of the translation strategies ranging from foreignization to domestication. One needs constant examining

<sup>14</sup> Lotman, J. (1976). *Struktura umetničkog teksta*. Beograd: Nolit.

<sup>15</sup> Sekulić, I. (1962). *Iz stranih književnosti*. Novi Sad: Matica srpska, Sabrana dela, vol.7-8.

<sup>16</sup> Vinaver, S. (2012). *Duša, zver, svest - Eseji o evropskoj i svetskoj književnosti*. Beograd: Službeni glasnik.

the complexities of translating children's literature and shedding light on the interpretive choices at work in moving texts from one culture to another. Henry Jenkins' definition of "transmedia storytelling"<sup>17</sup> encapsulates the world building strategies of most of today's popular children's literary/cultural products. The lure of Alice in Wonderland or Harry Potter is nowadays considerably enhanced by the plethora of interconnected media platforms – novel, film, animation, computer game, fan collectibles – all of which maximize audience engagement by unfolding an increasingly elaborate fictional reality. Even old children's literature utilizes the way in which each media "adds a new cultural layer, supporting more diverse ways of communicating, thinking, feeling, and creating than existed before" (Jenkins). This fact resonates with how translation as an inventive act of both inter-cultural and inter-temporal communication allows us to see in different ways the original text that always already "bears in itself all possible translations and gets richer with each additional reading rewriting," as Walter Benjamin<sup>18</sup> puts it.

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<sup>17</sup> Jenkins, H. (2003). *Transmedia Storytelling: Moving Characters from Books to Films to Video Games Can Make Them Stronger and More Compelling*. MIT Technology Review.

<sup>18</sup> Benjamin, W. (1996). *The Task of the Translator. Selected Writings Volume 1. 1913-1926*. Ed. Bullock, M. and Jennings, M. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 253-63.



## **FUNKCIJA PREVODILACA I KULTURNIH INSTITUCIJA U PREVOĐENJU ENGLESKIH ROMANA ZA DECU I MLADE NA SRPSKI JEZIK**

*Književno – umetnička dela koja se prevode čuvaju kulturno nasleđe određene nacije i čine ga sastavnim delom globalnog sistema. Od početka 20. veka pa sve do Prvog svetskog rata u Srbiji se engleska književnost mogla pročitati u časopisima kao što su: Srpski književni glasnik, Delo, Letopis Matice Srpske, Brankovo kolo i tako dalje. Pored prevoda, ovi časopisi su objavljivali recenzije i komentare, kao i mišljenja o metodama prevođenja. Naglašavane su univerzalne vrednosti kao što su međukulturna saradnja, sličan ali i različit mentalitet ljudi prikazanih kroz dela i akcije aktera romana, religija, prihvatanje razlika u svim oblicima. Što se tiče engleskog romana za decu i mlade, nastojanja autora da prevaziđu vremenske i kulturne razlike i time stimulišu razvoj duhovnog bogatstva čitatelja, pokazala su se opravdanim. Cilj ovog rada je da detaljnije prikaže specifičnosti ovog kulturnog i književnog rada.*

**Key words:** *kultura, prevodilac, engleski romani, deca, duhovno bogatstvo, književnost*